

rocky hill

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VOLUME 4, EDITION 1

Skating to the top

Sarah Girach excels in her chosen sport

See story on page 9



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- Sarah Andrea

See story page 14

ON THE COVER

Sarah Girach, 9, a fourth-grader at
West Hill School, is a champion in the
sport of speed inline skating.

Photo by Lisa Brisson

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Three vie for mayor

Baio faces challenge from both Marotta and Vassel

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Voters will see more than the usual amount of names on the ballot when they vote in the municipal election Nov. 7. In addition to the two major political parties, a third party has been formed called Unite Rocky Hill.

That also means voters will have three choices rather than the usual two when selecting the next mayor. Democrat Claudia Baio is seeking a second term. She is being challenged by Republican Lisa Marotta and Henry Vassel, a current member of the Town Council's GOP minority who served as mayor prior to Baio.



Claudia Baio

Claudia Baio

Claudia Baio is an attorney in general practice with the Hartford law firm of Howard, Kohn, Sprague & FitzGerald, LLP. She is, or has been, a PTO member, assistant scoutmaster, catechist at St. James Church, sports mom and past president of the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce.

She touted a record of success as reason why residents should give her and the Democratic team another term in office.

"We feel that we have made a lot of progress over the past two years, even in the case of a divided council," she said.

Priorities were set and momentum established on numerous projects and initiatives. One concept

they adopted was to enable everyone's voice to be heard and make government more accessible, she said.

Baio added that under her leadership the Town Council adopted a more open budget process and was able to reduce the town manager's proposed budget by a full mill before passing a budget with what she called a modest tax increase.

This has been an unusually difficult fiscal year because of the uncertainty over state budget cuts to municipal government and public education. The council developed a contingency plan to deal with the expected loss of funds.

It's not easy because everyone who serves on the council, including the mayor, is a volunteer. That takes time away from other aspects of their lives, including their families.

"We're going to focus on our record and work hard. There's a true sense of community here. The community's important to me," she said. "I like the opportunity to talk with many people in town."

"We made progress with regards to the senior center," she cited as one example of accomplishment.

A senior citizen liaison committee was established and a study conducted to determine the needs and desires of older residents. The council authorized a request for proposal to secure an architect to continue the work.

Seniors have been asking for more program space than is currently available in the community center wing attached to town hall.

She also cited progress in the long-running saga of redeveloping the former foundry property along the Connecticut River and promoting balanced economic development.

"We're seeing appropriate growth that's consistent with the vision for Rocky Hill," she said.

Baio makes it a point to attend as many local events as possible. She also holds Friday morning office hours at town hall or other locations.

"I made a commitment that I was going to make myself accessi-

ble," she said. "It's helpful that I have such a supportive family."

She believes in dialogue, debate and different political opinions, but does not like the trend in which she said disagreement sometimes turns into personal attacks.

The town is expected to act soon to seek demolition approval for the former Moser School on School Street so that a new intermediate school can be built on the same land. She pointed to that as another accomplishment of her term.



Lisa Marotta

Lisa Marotta

Lisa Marotta is a self-employed attorney. She ran as an independent for the Town Council in 2013 and is president of the Rocky Hill Education Foundation.

She was also chairman of Stay Invested, the community initiative that successfully advocated for a referendum to construct a new intermediate school on the site of the former Moser School. Marotta is also a member of the board of directors of the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce.

"I really felt compelled to get involved this election season. Another administration has ignored the needs of our residents," she said. "We are going to be an administration of firsts. We will be a voice for all the people of Rocky Hill."

She calls her ticket Team Rocky Hill. If elected, the plan is to create a five-year comprehensive plan for the

town's future.

"It's a really good group of professionals who are involved in the community right now. The Team Rocky Hill slate is comprised of new faces and that's a benefit to the town," Marotta said.

"I really believe in giving back to the community," she added. "I feel a big civic responsibility."

The 14-year resident said that everyone has a choice. They can either complain and do nothing or take action to make things better. She chooses the latter.

"The first thing that we want to focus on is the lack of proactive planning that we've witnessed over the past several years," she said.

Marotta said residents cannot afford another tax hike next year. She called the current council majority complacent and lacking in advance planning. She also criticized the bickering that currently takes place at the council table, saying it has reached an unprecedented level.

"We want to stop that."

Cash reserves are lower than in most other Connecticut municipalities, she added, and government continues to operate under an interim town manager. She contends a change in direction is needed.

"This is unsettling, particularly with talk of state cuts to municipal funding," she said.

Marotta goes into this campaign knowing that, should she win, she will have to dedicate a significant amount of time and energy to being mayor.

"I'm used to multi-tasking. I'm the type of person who operates best with a full plate. Once elected, I plan to step aside from my many volunteers positions and devote my time to the folks who live and work in Rocky Hill."

While incumbent Democrats take credit for moving forward on addressing the lack of space at the senior center, Marotta said this is not a major accomplishment. The town has known for a long time that the current facility is not sufficient to handle program demands.

She pledged that the Republicans, if elected, will move the process along with more energy.

Marotta added that her team has three primary goals: making proactive planning a priority, working within the municipal budget and making sure Rocky Hill is an inclusive community for all ages.

Henry Vassel

Henry Vassel owns and operates Vassel Brothers, a general construction business in Berlin. He is also the owner of Sunny Farm garden and nursery center on New Britain Avenue and staff captain with the Rocky Hill Fire Department.

He was Republican mayor from 2013-2015 and currently serves on the council minority. He also spent 10 years on the Town Plan and Zoning Commission.

Vassel decided to take a new approach this year and form a third party called Unite Rocky Hill. It has a full slate of candidates for Town Council including fellow GOP incumbents Cathy Vargas and Frank Szeps. It is not running any candi-



Henry Vassel

dates for the school board.

He wants to present voters with a ticket that doesn't just talk about bipartisan cooperation but actually represents it. The other three members are registered as either Democrat or unaffiliated voters.

"As an independent party, we are not going to look at issues from the [political] right or left, but from right and wrong," Vassel said. "The two-party system is broken and it's time to unite."

He is tired of the national politi-

cal divide and promises, if elected, to work for a better town without any influence from national politics. He's funding his own campaign and will not accept any campaign donations because people might want favors in return.

The four primary goals of Unite Rocky Hill are smart growth, fiscal responsibility, government ethics and supporting public education.

His mission statement states that a Vassel-led council will be proactive, fiscally responsible, engage in long-term planning for technology and infrastructure, and provide efficient and cost-effective town services. It will utilize a conservative fiscal policy to minimize tax increases and seek out smart economic development and alternate sources of revenue.

Residents will be encouraged to deliver "bold ideas" to improve town government and the schools.

"We are close to the point of no return with our present town debt. I have the experience and knowledge to try to turn our present direction around. Rocky Hill can go from a

debt that has doubled in two years to financially stable," Vassel said.

"The state legislature will eventually pass a budget which reduces aid to Rocky Hill. I will not pass along a property tax increase which mirrors a reduction in state aid," he said. "My second year in office, the budget actually went down."

"I will also not support a vote to issue bonds to bridge the shortfall. We cannot solve the town's problems by borrowing more money," he added.

"I believe in fiscal efficiency through a properly funded capital improvement plan that actually meets the current needs of our community while keeping future needs clearly in sight and planning accordingly."

Vassel charges that an alleged lack of oversight on the high school renovation project resulted in cost overruns and lawsuits filed by several contractors. He pledges to keep a close watch over the new intermediate school once construction commences to ensure that this does not happen again. **RHL**

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Former Moser students and staff were among those in attendance.

Photos by Mark Jahne

Breaking ground

Celebrating the old and preparing for the new school

by Mark Jahne
Editor

It was an evening to recall the past while at the same time celebrate the future. Shovels hit the dirt and ground was broken for a new intermediate school that will be constructed on the site of the former Dr. Oran A. Moser School on School Street.

Town and state officials, members of the Rocky Hill Historical Society and former Moser students and staff all gathered under cloudy skies and a few showers to

mark the occasion. The Sept. 8 event also included the opening of a time capsule entombed in the cornerstone in 1949 when the old building opened. It was originally called South School.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Zito served as master of ceremonies. Lois Stefano, who attended Moser in her younger days, created an artistic rendering of the old school that was presented to the historical society.

The time capsule, a rectangular cop-

per box, was popped open and its contents catalogued. It will be displayed in the schools and other locations around town and is now part of the historical society's collection.

"Students from all of the schools in Rocky Hill contributed to the Moser time capsule" 68 years ago, Zito said. "Some of the students from back in 1949 are here today."

"This time capsule is a great learning opportunity," Board of Education

A time capsule from 1949 was removed from the old school's cornerstone. It will be displayed in the schools and donated to the Rocky Hill Historical Society.

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Chairman Frank Morse said.

He added that a new time capsule will be placed inside the new school once construction begins.

"This is such a wonderful occasion," Mayor Claudia Baio said.

She noted the timing of this event was excellent because it is a precursor to the town's 175th anniversary that will be celebrated in 2018. Baio told the crowd that a bipartisan building committee appointed by the Town Council will oversee the project through its completion.

State Sen. Paul Doyle and state Rep. Antonio Guerrera offered brief remarks as the raindrops began to fall.

"Moser holds a special place in many of our hearts," Lisa Marotta said. "Severe overcrowding in our elementary schools is never an option for us."

She added that voters listened carefully to the facts, looked at the big picture and supported the project. Marotta was the chairman of Stay Invested, a community action group that worked toward a successful referendum to build the new intermediate school.

Thirteen students placed items in the time capsule back in 1949 and at least two of them were in attendance.

Items in the capsule included: pictures and facts about Rocky Hill industrial plants; Guide to the Development of Rocky Hill; two weeks of recent news; illustrations of 1949 styles, food and stock prices; pictures of all the schools in town; essay "A Day at West School"; Rocky Hill town report and pictures of the oldest houses in town; snapshots of three churches, the library, Ferry Landing, Legion Hall and Lookout



Members of the Board of Education wield ceremonial shovels to break ground for the town's new intermediate school. It will be constructed on the site of the former Moser School.

Tower on Quarry Hill; coin collection; local men who served in World War II with note of the seven who

died; postage stamps; comic strips and a copy of the April 14, 1949 Hartford Courant. **RHL**

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A quilt with a story

Rocky Hill Congregational Church prepares for its annual Country Fair

by Mark Jahne
Editor

When the Rocky Hill Congregational Church holds its annual Country Fair Oct. 21, the usual quilt raffle will be part of the festivities. But this is not the usual quilt.

Church member Stephanie Heneghan is the motivation behind what is called "Brownie's Quilt." Her grandmother Louella Elizabeth Frank Milliken Witt, otherwise known as "Brownie," created all of the squares that became the quilt back in the 1930s using a hand appliqué method.

Heneghan said those squares moved from attic to attic until she finally decided to put them to a positive use and have them woven into a quilt. The squares were designed in

what is called the Dresden Plate style and were assembled by the church's few remaining quilters, then machine quilted by Christian Lane Quilting.

Raffle tickets will be on sale for \$1 at the fair, in the church office and at the Oct. 14 Fallfest at Elm Ridge Park. The winner will be drawn at the church's roast beef dinner the evening of Oct. 28.

"It goes back at least to the 1970s that people did a quilt for the fair," Heneghan said. "This is a new quilt, but it's not new squares. Many of the squares are vintage fabric. We know that for sure."

She described Brownie, who lived in Kentucky, as a remarkable woman. When her husband died in 1939 during the Great Depression

she took on three jobs to support her family. Not only did she dig the family out of debt, she put two children through college.

She was born in 1895 and died in 1988. She retired, more or less, at the age of 80, but continued working part time for a bank.

The Country Fair runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 21. Returning features include a silent auction, holiday shop and antiques/collectibles room. Snacks and lunch will be offered at Candy by Candy, the snack shack, tea room and tables of baked goods.

The farmer's market presents a selection of produce, garden-related crafts, cheeses and jellies. Guests can browse the jewelry room, Sew Country and the white elephant



"Brownie's Quilt" will be the star raffle attraction at the annual Country Fair at Rocky Hill Congregational Church.

rooms. Kid's Corner will provide activities for children.

Heneghan said the church is making final arrangements to offer hay rides, a new attraction this year. **RHL**

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Skating to success

Fourth-grader earning top honors in her sport

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Sarah Girach may only be 9 years old, but she is already skating to the top. A fourth-grader at West Hill School, she has been competing in roller skating since the age of 7 and she has worked her way to the head of the pack.

"I'm very passionate about roller skating," she said. "I really just love it."

Her journey to winning multiple medals and trophies began in her home country of India, where roller skating was treated as a common form of exercise.

"When we were in India it was just a part of school, like P.E.," her mother, Sabina Naik said.

After moving with her parents and younger sister to the United States, Sarah wanted to continue the hobby

she had casually started, so she had her parents bring her to a local rink. The family was approached by an employee who suggested that Sarah look into coaching.

"It just happened," Naik said with a small shrug.

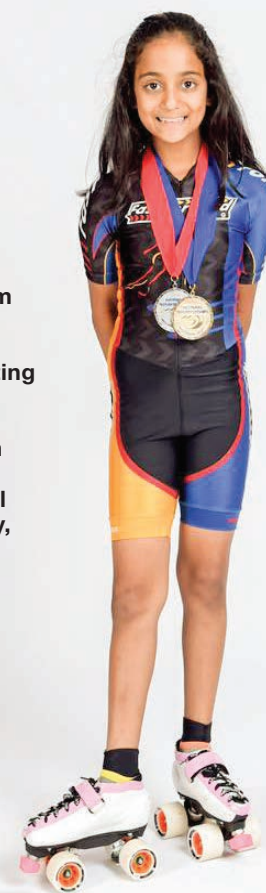
While the passion for the sport came quickly, success and recognition did not.

"We aren't sports people, we aren't athletes, so she had to work harder," Naik said.

"We saw her really struggle in the beginning," one of her coaches, Mike Godin, said. "She's the kind of girl who has to work for everything, but she puts the time in and she's the most coachable person I've ever had to deal with."

Sarah began working with a coach

Sarah Girach is shown in her official photo from the USA Roller Sports National Inline Speed Skating Championships. The 9-year-old walked away with a gold and silver medal for two-girl and four-girl relay, respectively.



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“She’s progressed so much from a girl who was last in every race to a girl who is fighting for the lead in every race.”

– Mike Godin

She’s only been skating for three years, but West Hill School fourth-grader Sarah Girach has quickly moved from novice to medal winner.

at age 6 and one year later began competing. She now trains five days a week, traveling to Wilbraham, Mass., three times weekly and in Hartford the other two days.

“I train a lot,” Sarah said. “Our

practices are two hours every day indoors and one hour outdoors, plus I exercise at home to build my endurance and my muscle so I have the power to skate.”

According to those who have

watched her grow, it is that commitment to her sport that has made Sarah stand out among her peers.

“She is such a hard worker,” Godin said. “She’s progressed so much from a girl who was last in

every race to a girl who is fighting for the lead in every race. She always says, that’s my goal, I want to be on the top of that podium. And now I can’t get her off it.”

Sarah’s skating competitions take the family all over the country, including monthly trips to compete in Maryland and frequent jaunts to Pennsylvania. They have started to result in a collection of medals, including silver in the recent juvenile four-girl relay and gold in the juvenile two-girl quad relay at the USA Roller Sports National Inline Speed Skating Championships in Lincoln, Neb.

“We have a box of medals and a lot of trophies,” Naik said with a smile. “We always joke that we’ll have to build a big showcase for them all.”

That most recent relay gold medal serves as a particular point of pride.

“She must have watched that video a hundred times,” Naik said.

Sarah may have already found a great deal of success in her age bracket but she is constantly looking to the future.

Her ultimate goal is to skate for Team USA at the international competition in China, but before then she wants to win at the national level in her division.

“This year at USA Nationals I learned that the goals you set, you have to work hard and be dedicated if you want to achieve them,” she said. “I want to win a national medal

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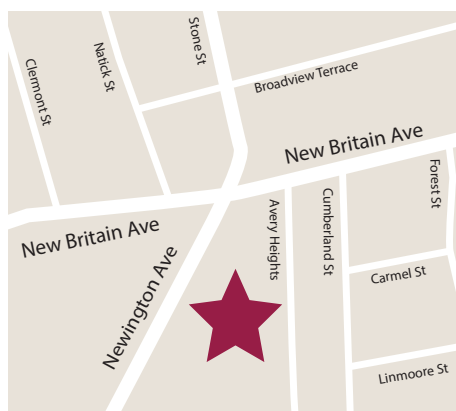
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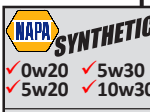
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LIFE welcomes letters to the editor from our readers. Letters may be sent via traditional mail or e-mail. A full name and street address are required for publication. Please include your telephone number for verification purposes. Letters should not exceed 300 words, and are subject to editing for accuracy, clarity, spelling, grammar, brevity and taste.

Mail letters to 540 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 0670 or email Mark Jahne, at mjahne@turleyct.com.



Sarah competed in the last race of the season of the Eastern Seaboard series Pennsylvania. She won the overall first prize for the season in all three events: quad skating, 5K on inlines and 10k on inlines in her individual races.

in the individual races in the juvenile division."

Her coach and her family believe that these goals could become a reality.

"When you see this coming from a child at 9 years old, it feels amazing to see," Naik said. "People appreciate and admire her for her commitment. I don't think at the age of 9 I was able to do all that she's done."

Sarah said that by competing in her sport she is also learning lessons that she will take with her into her adult life.

"It teaches you about hard work and dedication, but also about how to take care of yourself," she said.

"It gives her discipline for her life," her mother added. "You need to eat well, get rest and take care of yourself."

In addition to her success in skating, Sarah stays active by swimming, dancing and ice skating, as well as painting and playing the piano during her free time.

"She is actually one of the most amazing young ladies that I've ever encountered," Godin said.

"Whatever she does in life, she's going to be very successful. I just love her to death."

Naik said she and Sarah's father, Hanif Girach, are most supportive of their daughter's skating, but from the beginning they stressed that her education must remain a priority.

"I told her that if you want to do this, I will support you, but I will not compromise on your studies," Naik said.

Sarah is proud to be maintaining straight A's in her classes. Both her mother and her coach said it is who Sarah is as a person that makes them the most proud.

"When I tell you she's amazing, I really can't say it enough," Godin said. "She's almost overly nice."

"I am blessed to have her," her mother said. "She is a perfect combination of hard work, dedication and commitment." **RHL**

Business notes

Tallan, a business computer consulting company located in Rocky Hill, was selected as one of the 40 best places to work in Connecticut by the Best Companies Group and Hartford Business Journal.

Apple Rehab Rocky Hill, a branch of Apple Rehab Inc., commemorated one year using the Closed Pulse Irrigation system for patient wound care. This results in 50 percent faster healing of complex wounds and a reduction in the total cost to heal. CPI is an innovative and safe pulse irrigation system used to treat chronic non-healing wounds, utilizing the protection of a totally contained wound irrigation bag. It eliminates the danger of bacterial cross-contamination and spread of drug-resistant infections. It also simplifies care for patients with difficult wounds and removes 85 percent of bacteria, biofilms and debris with each treatment while reducing the risk of sepsis. **RHL**

People notes

Isabella Garzone graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of science degree in health sciences from Western New England University.

Nicholas Klatt graduated cum laude with a bachelor of science degree in health sciences from Western New England University.

Michael Bordonaro, Kelsey Brennan, Liana D'Attilio and **Thomas Kelly** were named to the dean's list at Keene State College.

Mallory Monaco graduated from Assumption College. She was also named to the dean's list.

Sydney Greenspan graduated magna cum laude from Ithaca College's School of Health Sciences and Human Performance with a degree in occupational therapy.

Amar Ojha was named to the dean's list at Bates College.

Madison Bakos achieved dean's high honors at Nichols College.

Caylee Short, a student at Central Connecticut State University, was awarded a Robert T. Kenney Scholarship from the American Savings Foundation.

Sharon Hansen, Shona Korr, Rachel Meisterling and **Sandra Orosco** were named to the dean's list at Goodwin College. **RHL**

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A market unto itself

Experts discuss the appeal of Rocky Hill real estate

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Every town has its own “feel,” its own nuances, when it comes to the real estate market. Rocky Hill is no different.

Local real estate professionals were asked to comment on what draws people to choose this town as the place where they want to establish their home. Their responses reveal what makes the town so attractive to people of all ages.

“The average sale price for Rocky Hill has stayed relatively the same over the past year,” Pat Deperry, office leader at Berkshire

Hathaway HomeServices, said.

What is different is the inventory, historically smaller than in surrounding towns.

“There were 40-some properties for sale at this time last year. Now there are 63 single-residential properties,” she said. “We do a lot of relocations.”

Berkshire Hathaway has handled 49 listings so far this year compared to 69 in 2016 for the same six-month period.

“There was a lot of new construction that came on the market. Now it’s evening out,” Deperry said.

People select Rocky Hill when they move to this area for employ-

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ment. She cited Henkel, a German-owned company, as one such example. The school district is also an attraction, as is the new Town Center West development and its luxury apartments, which have leased quickly.

"I have an agent who lives in those apartments. It seems the age group that is moving into town is

younger," Deperry said.

That's a strong indication that good schools matter to these home buyers. Also appealing is the town's proximity to Hartford and the many employers located in the city.

"We seem to be getting clients who are looking at Rocky Hill and the Avon-Farmington area. They don't want to travel a long distance

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to work," she said.

They are also looking for an excellent quality of life. Businesses are just as interested in locating here as residential property buyers.

"They're not going to invest their money in an area where they don't see long-term growth. I think we're going to continue to see Rocky Hill as a central destination," Deperry said.

She added that many new residents in recent years are people with executive-level jobs who work at Hartford area employers such as Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and the insurance companies. Deperry also speculated that increased cultural diversity in town is an additional attractive feature.

People do a great deal of research online prior to engaging the services of a Realtor, she added. They research cities, towns, houses, amenities and much more. Then they bring all of that information with them to the real estate office to help

locate just the right home.

"It's quite different. Today's buyer doesn't ask us, 'Where should I live?'" she said.

But a Realtor's input is still valuable, especially when it comes to such matters as property values, the process of buying a house and the ins and outs of mortgages. Deperry said her staff adapts to meet each client's needs.

"I've been in the business in this area for 34 years. The inventory in Rocky Hill has always been low," Debra Raymond said.

She is the vice president of sales at the William Raveis Real Estate regional office in Wethersfield. She believes the attractions to living in Rocky Hill include the new businesses opening in town and its convenient access to Route 9 and I-91.

"It's pretty much the center of the state," Raymond said.

She added that this town developed later than some of its neighbors who have little, if any, suitable land on which to build

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new homes. Her firm has a business partnership with Ron Drisdelle of Drisdelle Homes to market newly built luxury houses in the Ollari Farms development on Brook Street that range in price from \$600,000 to \$900,000.

Raymond said other positive attributes to this town include the fact that people who purchase property here have access to city water and sewer service through its membership in the Metropolitan District.

"The schools have a really good rating," she added. "The other thing Rocky Hill has a lot of is the over-55 communities. The town has a newer flair to it."

"We have an affordable entry-level market," Sarah Andrea said. "That's a huge part of the buying market."

She is the branch vice president for Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage.

Andrea said the marketplace is competitive and many homes receive multiple offers. She considers this an excellent time for someone who has been considering selling their home

to put it on the market.

That's because prices are holding stable and mortgage rates are low so buyers are ready to take action on a house that appeals to them.

"We have an affordable entry-level market. That's a huge part of the buying market."

- Sarah Andrea

A review of the past five years for how many days a listed home remains on the market also indicates the popularity of Rocky Hill. Properly priced homes only lasted nine or 10 days on the market before selling during the months of May and June.

Ray Carpentino, the town's economic development director, is not surprised. Some of the same factors that attract businesses to Rocky Hill also attract residents. They include its central location and highway access.

"People come because it's close to Hartford," he said.

Highway access to Middletown and New Haven is convenient. There is no doubt in his mind about the leading reasons why people make

their homes here.

"It would be the schools, the education system, the fantastic parks and recreation programs and facilities," Carpentino said. "We have many nice neighborhoods."

He also spoke of the diverse housing stock and the large numbers of apartments for those who prefer that style of living. He agreed with Deperry that the luxury units at Town Center West are filling up fast.

"Rents are pretty high in Rocky Hill," he said.

The one thing the town lacks is affordable housing as defined by state statute. There is a law that requires each town to have at least 10 percent of its housing stock meet the affordable guidelines and he said only 4.5 percent of the residential units in Rocky Hill currently qualify.

Carpentino said zoning regulations now require that the housing component of any new mixed-use development must include at least 10 percent affordable units.

Another attraction is food. From coffee shops to fine dining, this town has plenty to offer.

"We have at least 50 places where you can eat in Rocky Hill," he said.

He also addressed the obvious appeal to people of Indian heritage. There is a large number of such people in town and it is growing. Carpentino said they learn by word of mouth that Rocky Hill is a welcome place to live, with high-quality public education and proximity to major Hartford area employers.

"It's the location to the marketplace," he said. **RHL**

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These are the ideas that I hold close to heart. I believe that government is about helping people – for the people, by the people and with the input of the people.

I am a longtime resident of Rocky Hill, having called it my home since 1992. I have been a community leader on local issues and was appointed by the Town Council to my first term on the Planning and Zoning Commission in 2003. Since then, I have been appointed by the Town Council to five terms on the Planning and Zoning Commission, having served three terms as the Vice Chair of the Commission.

As a child, my father instilled in me that involvement in community service is paramount to being an active member of a community. It was my father who inspired me to become a second-generation volunteer firefighter. I have served as a Rocky Hill Volunteer Firefighter over the course of the past 18 years since 1999. I am currently a member of Fire Headquarters with the rank of Staff Captain. Through my years with the fire department, I have received multiple awards and accolades, including the Chief's Award for Outstanding Achievement in 2001 and the Chief's Award for Firefighter of the Year in 2002. I believe that there is no better way to give back to my community than by protecting the people and the property of the Town of Rocky Hill. I wish to carry this



commitment to serving as the next mayor of Rocky Hill.

I am a member of the 100 Club of Connecticut which provides financial assistance to families of police officers, correction officers and firefighters who have died in the line of duty. I am also a member of the Sequin Lodge #140, a division of the Connecticut Free Masons whose goal is to be of good character, to care for those less fortunate and to give back to one's community. Additionally, I am a proud sponsor of the Connecticut Special Olympics.

I am a small business owner and run a family construction business. I graduated from Central Connecticut State University in 1991 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance. With a finance degree and years of experience operating a small business, I understand the difficulties in budgeting and balancing a budget in this difficult economy. I understand the difference between actual needs and wants and also the complexity of deciphering whether an item is a need or want. I believe in fiscal efficiency through a properly funded capital improvement plan that actually meets the current needs of our community, while keeping future needs clearly in sight and planning accordingly.

I have created a team of individuals who are dedicated to making Rocky Hill a better place and to better oversee the future of the town. I have a tireless work ethic and pay specific attention to the basic necessities which make for a thriving town and have ensured that each and every member of my Team also has the same ideology, is capable of working productively together and shares a common sight for the future of Rocky Hill.

Rocky Hill has seen great expansion over the course of the past few decades, but with great expansion comes the need for change to compensate for that expansion. For these reasons, I have decided to answer the call for change and run as a candidate for mayor of this great town that I call home.

I look forward to speaking with many of you personally and to winning your support not only of myself but of my entire Team. Unite Rocky Hill looks forward to making a difference for the future of Rocky Hill.

Website: www.UniteRockyHill.com

Email: henry@uniterockyhill.com

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VOTE HENRY VASEL FOR MAYOR OF ROCKY HILL

Approved by Henry Vasel. Paid for by Unite Rocky Hill Vote Henry for Mayor, 32 Grimes Road, Rocky Hill

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MISSION STATEMENT

Unite Rocky Hill believes in proactive, fiscally responsible, long term planning for technology and infrastructure, and efficient cost effective delivery of town services. We will continue to work to minimize tax increases by implementing a conservative fiscal policy by following our capital improvement plan while exploring options for alternate sources of revenue, including smart economic development.

We will pursue new solutions as needed and encourage residents to contribute "bold ideas" for improvement of our town and school system. We are committed to building synergies between the community and our elected officials, transparency, and respectable discourse for the betterment of Rocky Hill. We believe in the excellence of Rocky Hill Schools and empowering our students to succeed.

On Tuesday, November 7th Rocky Hill residents will have the opportunity to vote for municipal candidates from three political parties—Republicans, Democrats and a unique Independent party assembled by past Mayor and Councilman, Henry Vasel. Henry knows what it takes to get the job done. He assembled a team called **Unite Rocky Hill** and chose the best candidates regardless of their political affiliation. **Unite Rocky Hill** is a mixture of fresh ideas and experience combined to form a path to a better Rocky Hill. Unite Rocky Hill **WILL** get the job done. The experienced members of the Team **will** enable swift and appropriate actions. They **WILL** hire a permanent experienced Town Manager. They **WILL** hire a Town Attorney in compliance with the Town Charter. They **will** be fiscally prudent and plan for the future. They **WILL** listen to the residents. Please join me in supporting Henry Vasel for Mayor and his team consisting of Michele Collins, Cindy Tangney, Larry Lindenberger, Cathy Vargas and Frank Szeps. Let's Unite Rocky Hill. You **will** be investing in a better future!

Nadine Bell
Town Councilor

I write today to endorse Henry Vasel for Mayor of Rocky Hill. Henry is a savvy local businessman and can bring some common-sense leadership and decisiveness back to the mayor position which has been lacking the last couple of years.

His service and dedication to the town comes in many forms. Henry has already served successfully as Mayor. In addition, he's also served as Council Member. Further, his volunteerism for the town comes in many diverse forms from being a volunteer member of the Rocky Hill Fire Department for the past 18 years as well as serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission for over 10 years; three of which were as Vice Chairman.

Henry is not a newcomer to the town; He knows the town intimately and cares for it a great deal which is evident through his diverse and distinguished past service.

A vote for Henry Vasel is a vote for returning common-sense, dedication and respect back to the Mayor's office.

Rocco Sanzo
Prior Town Councilor

VOTE HENRY VASEL FOR MAYOR OF ROCKY HILL

Approved by Henry Vasel. Paid for by Unite Rocky Hill Vote Henry for Mayor, 32 Grimes Road, Rocky Hill

Old Church Concert Series starts new season at Methodist church

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Mike Wilcox was driving by the Rocky Hill United Methodist Church in March 2016 when he saw a sign stating that the church hall was available for rent. Wilcox, who has been involved with the Podunk Bluegrass Music Festival in Hebron for more than 15 years and is now its executive director, was intrigued.

"I asked, 'Do you rent the church itself?'" he remembered.

A long-time champion of local musicians, he wanted to see if he could somehow use the church's space as a venue for state musicians.

"I set out on a mission to find a

way to promote them and what's happening in Connecticut," Wilcox, who was a drummer in a rock band for many years, said.

He started an acoustic stage at Podunk in 2014 and had something similar in mind for the church.

He first met with Janice Beaucar, who wears a number of hats at the church, including volunteer church secretary and chairman of the staff-parish relations committee. She's also the person who changes the messages on the sign outside.

"I spoke with Janice and talked about what my idea was," Wilcox said.

The Old Church Concert Series was soon born. The Rev. Soon Kook Ahn, who serves at both the Rocky

"We got a good response. Every show we had a few more people."

– Mike Wilcox



Photos by Mara Dresner

Janice Beaucar wears many hats at Rocky Hill United Methodist Church, including changing the message on the sign outside the church. One of those signs caught the attention of Mike Wilcox and led to the founding of the Old Church Concert Series.

Hill church and Higganum United Methodist Church, was immediately on board.

"He was thinking about starting an open mic [night]," Wilcox, who is retired from the information technol-

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ogy profession, said.

"This is much more formalized. There are fabulous musicians, great music. It was just serendipity. Here's a great little church with wonderful acoustics. Here's a great guy with all these connections. It was meant to be," Beaucar said.

The first concert was held in March 2016. They hosted three shows that spring.

"We got a good response. Every show we had a few more people. After I got some feedback from some people who attended and the musicians themselves, I thought, 'OK, I'm going to go for this,'" Wilcox said.

He did an online fundraising campaign to help with some expenses and 2016-2017 was the first complete season. Concerts are held one Friday evening a month from September through May.

"It's an acoustic show to highlight what is created here in Connecticut and it is a wide variety," Wilcox said.

While the performances are acoustic, they do use microphones from Telefunken Elektroakustik in South Windsor. There are usually three performers or bands each night and styles might include folk, rock or blues.

"When you strip it down to just a guitar, to just a voice, it becomes more intimate. The musicians themselves love this. They're not competing with gabbing people, clanging glasses and other distractions," he said.

His wife Kate Garrahy greets people as they enter. Doors open at 6 p.m. for the 7 p.m. shows and the church sells food prior to the performance and at intermission.

"Over time we've learned not to just offer snacks like potato chips. We've learned to offer soup; we've had sandwiches," Beaucar, who's self-taught on the piano and used to play guitar at Catholic folk masses, said.

There are also homemade baked goods. Admission is by donation, which goes to the performers. The church keeps the money from concessions. Wilcox sells ads for the programs to help with general expenses.

The concerts have been attracting 60 to 70 people per show.

"The music is fabulous. We get some of our church family to come, but it is mostly people who follow the artists or just heard about the concert series," Beaucar said.

"It's a fun event in a church. People think of churches as stuffy, old, dry things and here's something that's very, very hip. Pastor Ahn is also very musically oriented and the two of us want to make this more of a musical church. It's a fun event to bring the church and the community together with music." **RHL**

Rocky Hill United Methodist Church is located at 623 Old Main St. For more information about the monthly concerts, including a schedule and sponsorship opportunities, visit oldchurchconcerts.com.

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Europe comes to the Silas Deane

New market brings world-wide flavors to Rocky Hill

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

The Silas Deane Highway has a new international flavor with the addition of Euro Grocery, which opened the end of June. The store is owned by Dritan Lirioni, who came to the United States with his wife, Ilda, moving to Connecticut from Albania.

"We came here on September 2011. We had just got married on August that year," he said. "I have a sister here who came 10 years ago, so it was the first place to relocate."

Lirioni said he struggled in the beginning while trying to find a career path in his

new country.

"I stayed in this state over three years. After that I moved down to Florida for six months, running a jewelry business. Then after Florida we moved to upstate New York," he said.

"The business I was running was a grocery wholesale distribution. Then I start growing my business and trying to pull it through Connecticut because I kind of was missing this place and my relatives and friends," he added.

The couple, now with a 3-year-old son, moved back to the state in October 2016, buying a house in Farmington. While he wanted to stay in the grocery world, Lirioni

Dritan Lirioni of Albania is the owner of the new Euro Grocery on the Silas Deane Highway.

Photos by Mara Dresner

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Salamis and sausages are a specialty of Euro Grocery.

decided to shift his focus.

"I already was in trading and importing European for another chain. It was time for me to open my own retail grocery and bring those fine products to our communities. I already knew the market," Lirioni said.

"Of course, I made some research on European communities who are still kind of loyal to their own products – the Albanians, the Bosnians, the Greeks, the Italians,

Polish, Portuguese, these kind of communities. It's very interesting to work with them. As far as I know, they keep looking for the products I carry here [that] they used to consume a lot back in their own countries," he added.

He took some time looking for the perfect spot for his store.

"[I thought about] where the best place [is] to open the grocery. I check everywhere in the entire state. Where is best for me, my family and

the customers, was somewhere in Rocky Hill, Wethersfield. I'm not really afraid of competition. I wanted to be close to this community," he said.

"At least they don't have to drive, down to New Britain or Hartford, or even down in the Bronx. If they don't have options, they [might] have to drive to Astoria in Brooklyn to find own products. The Portuguese struggle to find their own products around here. They have to drive to

Massachusetts or Rhode Island," he said.

"Of course, my people from Albania, in that region, they need this kind of stuff. For that reason, I decided to open in here. It's a family orientated business, me personally and my wife, we stay on top of business and take care of everything."

He also has one employee who speaks several languages.

"She's very helpful, very great. I do appreciate what she's doing; she helps me a lot," Lirioni said.

"The whole concept is to have at least the main product lines, the main items from the communities from Poland, from the Balkan region, from the Greeks, the Italians, the Portuguese, from Armenia," he said.

He's adding new items each week.

"I'm trying to work pretty close right now with those people and their requests. I'm trying to see what their requests are. I have a lot of things to bring in there," Lirioni said.

"I'm trying to see what their requests are. I know the sources, I know the suppliers. It's a challenge, gaining all these products together and bringing to one small store that I have in here, but it's working out pretty well."

Rosetta Fraleigh, president of Cutters Edge Inc., which is located in the same plaza as Euro Grocery, had a special request.

"I said, 'You need to carry hummus.' The next thing you know, they carry hummus," she said.

"The store is lovely. The items he

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Euro Grocery features different types of feta cheese and olives.

has are really unique. My whole family is from Italy. Growing up, we would travel there often. He has authentic items from Italy,” Fraleigh added.

“The best things he carries are Italian dried sausage and breads he gets from Sanremo Bakery. Sanremo bread is my favorite bread; it’s phenomenal. And the dried sausage is the most authentic,

next to what my parents used to make.”

She’s also impressed with the assortment of cookies and teas.

“I think everything is reasonably priced; you just can’t beat it. I really do wish them well. I think they have some neat, neat items,” Fraleigh said. “It’s a very good addition to the neighborhood.”

“I work closely with suppliers to get the best products for the best price to make the customers happy.”

– Dritan Lirioni

The store has a variety of both fresh and packaged goods from around the world. One of the highlights is the selection of cheese.

“My main focus is on the cheeses. We have a huge variety of cheeses. First, start with the feta cheese. We try to bring here the most quality of imported feta cheese and some domestic; Greek feta cheese, which is famous, made out of cow, goat, sheep; Bulgarian cheese, French cheese. It’s 90 percent imported,” he said.

Italian cheeses include provolone, parmesan, pecorino Romano, reggiano, ricotta and salata, while Greek yellow cheeses include vlahotiri, kefalograviera, kasseri and kefalotiri. There are numerous other options, such as a variety of feta cheese that is displayed in a case with olives,

“We have the finest olives, all very reasonable price, all imported, the Greek famous Kalamata and Italian green olives,” he said.

There’s also salami and sausage sold fresh

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Lirioni said that many of the items are natural.

"What I've seen is that the farther you go through eastern Europe, you're looking at countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union. More is being manufactured organic and natural over there. There's no GMO, no preservatives and very reasonable [price]. The only challenge is it's run in different languages," he said.

"It's kind of hard for Americans to understand and realize what is this exactly. I'm pretty sure once they try it, they will love it," he added.

"Americans are concerned [with] not having preservatives or GMOs. When they know it's European imported, they know they won't have those kind of problems. It's a safe product line. They're trying, they're loving it."

He offers tastes of some of his merchandise, such as jellies, cheeses and olives, to help familiarize Americans with new items.

"I let everybody try to see the taste," he said. "There are things you can't find in a regular chain supermarket here."

Lirioni noted that his store is a true European market.

"You go to certain European stores – everybody is putting European market, European grocery store; everything is European – and when you go inside, it's a specific line of products from a specific country. You think you're going to a European store and then you're going to a Polish store, or only Bosnian or Balkan products," he said.

"That's not what I'm trying to do right now. I want to bring the main products so you do not have to drive and to go too far away to find them, where they can just have it in here," he said.

He's also working with various ethnic communities to bring things such as religious items and perfume to the store. Lirioni is excited about the reception he's received thus far and is committed to keeping prices low.

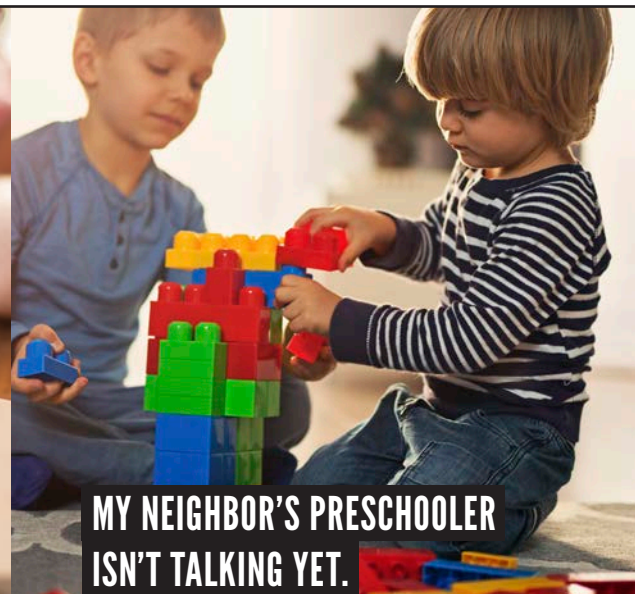
"Not because I just opened it. I'm not using that game; those prices are always going to stay there. With imported products, when importers are bringing goods from Europe, they use the Euro value, it makes the price change. I always try to get good price for the customers to make them happy," he said.

"I've been in the market a significant time. I know the sources. I work closely with suppliers to get the best products for the best prices to make the customers happy. There is no doubt to that." **RHL**

Euro Grocery is located at 2162 Silas Deane Highway and is open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Call 860-785-8776 for additional details.



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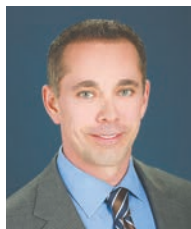
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Grade 12

Academic Honors

Angela Alvarado, Chica Ayala, Charles Ball, Kristopher Begen, Francois Bourdier, Taylor Bowler, Christina Braun, Nam Bui, Alexia Burns, Amanda Carducci, Jay Chandran, Brooke Chao, Connor Charamut, Isabella Colasacco, Urja Desai, Luke Devine, Anthony Fortes, Ryan Fraleigh, Melissa Gamonal, Evan Gauvin, Tanner Gentile, Christopher Hansen, Hunter Held, Justin Hock, Erin Hourihan, Arlindi Hoxha, Nico Karabetsos, Fotos Kroji, Peter Lucente, Krystal Macca, Joseph Monaco, James Pitchell, David Scalise, Stephen Shepard, Julia Simboski, Katherine Sullivan, Jake Walling and Ryan Wolf.

Grade 11

Academic Honors

Victoria Acca, Victoria Bower, Luke Brennan, Christopher Brescia, Christian Cannata, Christian Castanho, Heredia Colon, Kristen Costello, Jordan DelMastro, Andrew DiMatteo, Thomas DiMatteo, Haley Doll, Michelle Dougherty, Gina

Genovese, Elena Goodman, Sophie Kurdziel, Marc LaPuma, Kevin Moise, Christiana Montalbano, Grace Moore, Tyler Morgan, Eesha Nasir, Jason Oostendorp, Kruti Patel, Brianna Place, Szymon Ptak, Melissa Rambharose, Ryan Robinson, Rachel Roncaioli, Brigid Schulenburg, Daniel Schumann, Abigail Stock, Jonathan Tefoe, Brenna Tweedy, Joseph Twigg, John Uricchio, Luke Vassallo, Crystal Vinci, Jacob Weber, Kristin Wesley, William White and Wiktoria Zduniak.

Grade 10

Academic Honors

Colin Amo, John Blair, Hannah Brown, Meagan Caesar, Rachel Calcagni, Daniella Castanho, Adam Chao, Chloe Colandrea, Christopher Conlan, Viviana Delgado, Connor Devanney, Dominic DiBlasi, Felicity Frate, Michelle Galdamez, Nathan Gerace-Hicks, Emily Geremia, Ernestina Gyamfi, Olena Herasym, Charles Hilton, David Hofmann, Brett Kiesel, Alexandra Lopez, Sarah Mitchell, Emma Molloy, Alyssa Morabito, Julisbeth Negrón-

Carrasquillo, Patrick Ostrowski, Prem Patel, Aaron Pavelec, Griffin Pickett, Skyler Pitchell, Anna Riedinger, Julia Rosa, Robert Rosa, Nijaz Salihovic, Tyler Schiavone, Spencer Shepard, Sarah Simard, Lillian Spada, Brenna Sweeney and Sophie Twigg.

Grade 9

Academic Honors

Arbaz Afzal, Mia Aglieco, Olivia Binaco, Austin Bouchard, Ryan Boyle, Anela Cekic, Avani Chhabra, Curtiss Clemens, Patrick Conlan, Yuanlong Dai, Emma Drumm, Matthew Durkin, Annabella Ensign, Brendan Fairbanks, Sean Fontaine, Justin Fraleigh, Jordan Glover, Amila Korkutovic, Alexander Koskovich, Salvatore Lonero, Lynda Lyn, Emily Marchand, Anna Montalto, Abigail Murray, Marina Nanci, Michael Pantano, Kaylie Pavel, Julia Pawlich, Nicholas Plakunov, Michael Ptak, Jake Rajotte, Julia Rizzo, Matthew Sapia-Banas, Nicolas Saux Fernandez, Benjamin Smith, Liam Sullivan, Luke Thurz, Konnor Walsh and Nicardo Wright. **RHL**

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October calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2 **Preschool Music & Play**, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, 33 Church St., 860-258-7623 or rockyhillct.gov/library, also Oct. 16

SCORE Small Business Counseling, 12:30-4:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Pokemon League, 4 p.m., for grades 2-8, Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 16, 23 and 30

Cr-afternoon, 4:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 16

Google Computer Science Workshop: Fashion & Design, 5 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 16, 23 and 30

Music & Movement, 6:15 p.m.,

Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 16 and 30

3 **Fun for Ones**, 10:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Knitting Group, 11 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Books & Babies, 11:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Google Computer Science Workshop, 4 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Spooksters, 4:15 p.m., for grades 2-5, registration required, Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 10, 17 and 24

CT Hearing Voices Network support group, 7 p.m., Rocky Hill Congregational Church, 805-

817 Old Main St., second floor classroom, 203-391-4968, also Oct. 10, 17, 24 and 31

4 **Playgroup Plus**, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

On Our Own Preschool Storytime, 1 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Coloring for Adults, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Evening Knitting Group, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Mystery Book Discussion, 6:30 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

5 **La Leche League**, 10 a.m. to noon, 23 Textbook Ave., 860-529-2307 or mgubala@sbcglobal.net

ESL Classes, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

Minecraft Club, 4 p.m., for grades 2-5, Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

Minecraft Club, 5:30 p.m., for grades 6-12, Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

Introduction to Virtual Reality, 5:45 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

Family Make It, Take It, 6 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 12, 19 and 26

6 **Art Start**, 10:30 a.m., for ages 2 and older, Cora J. Belden Library

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- 8.) Games
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- 10.) Fireworks

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Shuttles Available from RHHS Starting at 3:30pm

7 Playgroup Plus, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 21 and 28

Wii U Gaming Club, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

9 Career One on One, 10 a.m. to noon, registration required, Cora J. Belden Library

10 Flu Clinic, 9 a.m. to noon, community center, 55 Church St., 860-721-2822 or ccthd.org

The Yale Gargoyles, 6:30 p.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

11 Getting Started with iPhone & iPad, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Girl Power Hour, 4:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 25

Preschool Music & Play, 6:15 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 25

Friends of the Library Board, 7 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

12 Toddler Time, 10:15 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also Oct. 19 and 26

14 Friends of the Library Book Sale, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library, also noon to 4 p.m. Oct. 15

Alzheimer's or Dementia Caregivers Support Group, 10 a.m., registration required, The Atrium at Rocky Hill, 1160 Elm St., 860-563-5588 or kpernerewski@bench-

markquality.com

Fallfest, 3-8 p.m., Elm Ridge Park, rockyhillct.gov/parkrec

18 Getting Started with Android Phones & Tablets, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

19 Flu Clinic, 9 a.m. to noon, St. James Church, 767 Elm St., 860-721-2822 or ccthd.org

20 LEGO Free Play, 10:30 a.m., Cora J. Belden Library

23 Drug Awareness Program sponsored by Wethersfield-Rocky Hill Elks Lodge 2308, 7 p.m., community center, 860-257-8177

24 Health and Wellness with Dr. Klughers, 6:30 p.m., registration requested, Cora J. Belden Library

25 Getting Started with Windows 10, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

28 Monthly Makerspace, 2 p.m., Cora J. Belden Library

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

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Events *spotlight*

Annual Tag Sale

Sept. 30, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Academy Hall, 785 Old Main St.
860-563-6704 or inforhhistory@gmail.com

The Rocky Hill Historical Society presents this sale featuring furniture, kitchen items, toys, books, jewelry and more. All proceeds will be used to fulfill the society's mission to protect, preserve and promote this town's history.

Royal Blues 19th Annual Invitational

Sept. 30, 4 p.m.

Rocky Hill High School
50 Chapin Ave.

The Rocky Hill High School Royal Blues Marching Band, under the

direction of James Shuman, presents its 2017 Invitational "Africa: Ceremony, Song & Ritual." General admission is \$10 or \$5 for senior citizens and students.

The marching band is led by Drum Major Bree O'Connor. Section leaders, band captain and principal players are Jonathan Adamczyk, Daniel Cho, Lauren Colasacco, Connor Gagne, Nathan Gerace-Hicks, Sarah Mitchell, Christi Montalbano, Bree O'Connor and Jill Peckham. Members of the Class of 2018 are Dillon Cerpa, Connor Gagne, Christi Montalbano and Bree O'Connor. The Royal Blues will also perform their field show in competition Oct. 14 at Rockville High School, Oct. 21 at Robert E. Fitch High School and at the USBands New



England State Champions in New Britain Oct. 28.

Rocky Hill Fallfest

Oct. 14, 3-8 p.m.

Elm Ridge Park
rockyhillct.gov/parkrec

This marks the 10th anniversary of this popular autumn attraction presented by Rocky Hill Parks and Recreation. Attractions will include amusement rides, tractor hayrides, a haunted hayride, face painting, arts

and crafts. Country musician Steve Daggett will perform from 4-7 p.m. and there will be a costume contest and parade during his intermission. Food trucks will be on hand to provide sustenance. Businesses and civic groups will have booths displaying their wares and explaining what they do. The usual bonfire will take place at 6:30 followed by fireworks sponsored by Burris Logistics and Henkel Corporation. In the event of rain, the festival will be postponed to the following day. **RHL**

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News roundup

Welcome back, drive safe

The Rocky Hill Public Schools held its annual welcome back gathering for its school bus drivers at the start of the academic year. The district contracts with Durham School Services for student transportation.

Park adopts new hours

Dinosaur State Park will operate on a reduced schedule from Oct. 1 until Dec. 31. The museum will be open Thursday, Friday and Saturday only.

The walking trails will be open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be no public access to the park on Sunday or Monday. Dinosaur State Park is located at 400 West St.

Apple Rehab fulfills dream

Apple Rehab Rocky Hill, a branch of Apple Rehab Inc., helped a resident's



Welcome back bus drivers

dream of attending a Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers concert with his wife come true by collaborating with the Dream Foundation, Live Nation and Masonicare Partners Hospice.

Apple Rehab Rocky Hill rented two portable oxygen tanks and the Dream Foundation purchased the tickets for the couple. It claims to be the only national dream-granting

organization whose efforts play a critical role in the special end-of-life care that focuses on improving quality of life for dreamers and their families. **RHL**

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Allie Rivera

Children gathered at the Cora J. Belden Library for its Art Start preschool program. Youngsters ages 2 to 5 listened as Robin Strumpf read the story “Noni the Pony Goes to the Beach,” then worked with a parent to create their own pony out of paper and cardboard.



Getting an Art Start

- 1.** Two-year-old Robby Carlson used green and purple stamp markers to decorate his horse. **2.** Mila Messier, 4, and her sister Tessa, 2, had help from their nanny, Taylor Adiletta, with their pony creations. **3.** Malinda Nazario watched and held on tight as her daughter, 3-year-old Alexandria, concentrated on using scissors.
- 4.** Sisters Guiliana, 5, and Lyla Gugliotti, 2, show off their horses. **5.** Atlas Dalesio, 2, worked to add color to his pony. **6.** Five-year-old Akshara Rajesh showed off her project. **7.** Filling in as leader of the program, Robin Strumpf demonstrated how to turn construction paper into a colorful mane.
- 8.** Three-year-old Sara Velasquez got encouragement on her project from her mother, Andrea Gomez.



Where to **FIND IT**



Get your spook fix

This painted wooden jack-o-lantern box will add some fright to your festivities. It can be found at Elite Repeats consignment shop, located at 2162 Silas Deane Highway, Rocky Hill. It can be reached at 860-571-0508.

Scents for the senses

Bring the beach inside with these candles. The bases are made of sand with 100% soy candles. They come in multiple sizes and scents such as blackberry vanilla, coconut lime and cinnamon apple. They're hand-made right in East Hartford by The Olive Palm and sell for \$12 to \$25. Find them at Finders Keepers, 3045A Main Street, 860-633-GIFT (4438), finderskeepers-glastonbury.com. **RHL**



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Living **spaces** Home and Garden

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Living Spaces



Big possibilities for tiny kitchens

Galley kitchens can have airy feel

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Many of us feel an occasional pang of envy when flipping through a home design magazine or scrolling through Pinterest. But for those with a galley style kitchen, those photos of friends and families happily cooking and socializing around an island while checking on delicacies in a double oven are especially far removed from reality.

"A galley kitchen is a small, compact cooking area that usually has a counter along two long walls. Some homes contain only one counter along one long wall. They are beneficial to a home because the small kitchen allows for more room to be used elsewhere. However, it is somewhat difficult for more than one person to use the galley kitchen," said Adam Gove, who with his brother, Matt, owns Gove Restoration LLC in Wethersfield.

"Sometimes, an entry door to the home is located in a galley kitchen. This provides a challenge when designing these kitchens in that the door opens into the kitchen thus blocking access to certain cabinets. In a condo or townhouse, a galley kitchen does not typically have a door leading to the exterior of the house. The biggest challenge when

remodeling a galley kitchen is using the space appropriately."

Matt Gove said the hallmark of a galley kitchen is "a kitchen that utilizes a layout that has more length than width. Cabinets would be located on each wall and face each other so that the work area becomes a narrow space. This layout can be very efficient if done properly and is often referred to as a 'corridor' style kitchen as well. It's a popular option for apartments and other layouts where space is limited," he noted.

Part of the difficulty in renovating the space comes from the fact that there are certain necessities that a kitchen needs to have.

"Making sure that the kitchen can be used efficiently is by far one of the most challenging parts of a galley kitchen remodel. Space is at a premium, so being creative with the layout and working with the client to see how they use their kitchen is crucial in making a successful galley kitchen," Matt Gove said.

One way to maximize space is to rethink your cabinets.

"Have cabinets up to the ceiling; use up as much height as you can," Frank Christino of Christino Kitchens and Remodeling in Glastonbury recommended.



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Living Spaces

"Frameless cabinets are great for small spaces. Each cabinet interior space is an inch and a half wider than traditional framed cabinets."

Normando Moquete Jr., CEO/owner of Pinnacle Maintenance LLC in Farmington, said that a couple of quick tweaks will make a difference.

"Add more wall cabinets for storage and a built-in microwave to make more countertop space," he said.

While it's easy to get seduced by the latest accessories, many of them take up too much space for a galley kitchen.

"Cabinet accessories kill a lot of space. Try not to over-accessorize the cabinets. What that means is there are a lot of these pull-out mechanisms like for oils and vinegars or pots and pans lids; there are all kinds of special inserts that make it more convenient but use up space.

The amount of space you'd lose is crucial so you want to make sure you do not over-accessorize," Christino warned.

With enough planning – and if you're willing to give up some cabinet depth – he said it's possible to even fashion a small seating area.

"With galley kitchens, it's hard to get seating, but you can get a tiny little peninsula," Christino said. "We

can bring the countertop out and around and it can become a table, as well as a countertop surface and entertaining area."

Adam Gove said that depending on the kitchen's design, seating might be an option on the outside of the kitchen.

"A galley kitchen does not always contain two long walls. It can be made using one long wall, usually the exterior wall, and base cabinets on the opposite side. This allows for the adjacent living space to be open to the kitchen. It also provides for a seating area on the living space side of the countertop," he noted.

He said there are numerous challenges when looking to remodel a galley kitchen, all related to the small size.

"Wasted space is not an option in the cabinet design. We use custom cabinets made to maximize the cabinet area. This means there are not any voids between cabinets created by fillers used to 'stretch' cabinets from one wall to another. It is important to remember light when remodeling these kitchens. Not enough light can make the space feel closed in. Under-cabinet lighting combined with 4-inch recessed lights, both on dimmers, allows for a great deal of light without your eye

being drawn to the source," he suggested. "Another challenge is making the space feel open. Light color cabinets along with open shelving and glass doors with lighting in the cabinet can make the kitchen feel larger than it is.

"Storage can be a challenge as well. Utilizing open shelving above windows and hiding appliances behind cabinet panels accomplishes not only storage concerns, but also making the space feel open. The use of toe kick heaters is a great way to free up wall space if needed by removing the baseboard heat and installing a heater in the toe kick of a cabinet."

Matt Gove noted that with a traditional galley kitchen, you can lose efficient work flow when cooking.

"In a true galley kitchen with the cabinets closely facing each other, creating the 'work triangle' in the kitchen can be tough. By locating the sink in the cabinet that connects one side of the kitchen to the other, making a 'u' shaped layout, it creates one of the points of the triangle and allows for the corner cabinets to have added storage in them in the form of a lazy susan or a half-moon pull-out shelving unit," he said. "Wall ovens and counter depth refrigerators don't waste any space and keep the footprint of the cabinets nice and

straight, which ultimately allows for better foot traffic areas. Open shelving and full extension pull-out drawers and shelves can provide efficient ways to store everything from pots and pans to pantry items. Lastly, creating a pass-through to an adjoining room can give the illusion of a much bigger space while helping to open the space up for entertaining purposes. The downside of that option would be the loss of upper cabinetry space, but if it is a larger galley kitchen, it's a great way to add character to the kitchen."

If you're not ready for a full remodel, Matt Gove said there are a number of ways to refresh your galley kitchen.

"Adding a tile backsplash or replacing an existing one can really update things. Also, adding some aftermarket full-extension slide-out shelves in some of the cabinets can provide much easier access to items that may be hard to get to. Re-facing or painting cabinets a lighter color can help to transform a galley kitchen. In addition, by changing out cabinet hardware to something sleek and simple, it helps to modernize the cabinets," he said. **RHL**

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Living Spaces

Kitchen cents

Where to splurge and how to save

by Lynn Woike
LIFE Staff



Whether you're building, remodeling or just updating your kitchen, some things are worth splurging on.

Where you splurge and where you save in the kitchen depends on the client, said Eric Sharp, manager of SK Lavery Appliance in Glastonbury.

For instance, clients who love to cook will likely splurge on a range, and those who entertain often or have large families may be more likely to spend more for a dishwasher with a shorter cycle.

"Splurge on what you use the most," Sharp said, adding, "Some people even own two dishwashers."

He has noticed that if someone splurges on one thing – such as a beverage center – they are likely to "splurge on everything to get that awesome-looking kitchen ... so everything matches."

Other customers are willing to mix and match brands to save money.

There's a lot to splurge on, he said, such as microwaves in a drawer under the counter and a refrigerator that take pictures of its contents so that you can check to see if more milk is needed or you're out of ketchup. While refrigerator doors have been dispensing water and ice for years, some now have Keurig K-Cup brewing systems in the doors.

"You can spend some money if you want to," Sharp said.

"The trending splurge is the induction electric cooktop range that performs like gas," he said, noting that customers who see it in the showroom see how it performs like gas but is much easier to clean.



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Living Spaces

"I think people should splurge on cooking," said Brian Zippin of Contractors Home Appliances, East Granby, noting that people are eating out less and preparing more of their meals at home.

Those who like to cook can consider a more powerful or a larger range. By expanding from the standard 30-inch models, customers can get additional features including more burners, griddles, grills, a convection oven and a proofing feature, he said.

To save money on appliances, he suggested shopping "the calendar holidays" such as Columbus Day, Labor Day, July 4th and Black Friday, which has turned into the entire month of November.

"The whole month of November, the manufacturers are very aggressive," Zippin said.

Another way to save is to take advantage of offers and promotions. For instance, buying four appliances from one manufacturer results in a \$400 rebate and a 10 percent rebate from another, he said. Other times, a manufacturer might offer a free dishwasher when you buy a range.

Many people "like to show off the jewelry – like the faucets and the cabinet hardware and the appliances," said Jim Corthouts, general man-

"Splurge on what you use the most. Some people even own two dishwashers."

–Eric Sharp

ger at Home Design District and Holland Kitchens in West Hartford.

"So, the place to save in doing that would be the cabinetry," he said, noting that cabinets have the largest price tag and the largest fluctuation when it comes to price. "You have the largest control over your budget when choosing cabinets."

There is a 60 percent difference in price between the high-end custom cabinetry and the least expensive line. Semi-custom options offer even more savings, Corthouts said.

He suggested customers save money by delaying the installation of a separate buffet area or a wet bar, and by not choosing a built-in refrigerator. Sinks and countertops are other places you can save some money in the kitchen. If you have hardwood floors you can salvage, that would also



reduce remodeling costs.

"It's important not to cut corners in lighting. You want to have a really good lighting plan," he said, noting that LED lights are coming down in cost.

What will save you the most, Corthouts said, is having "someone who's been around the block" help you design your space.

"They're going to be able to help someone with their budget more than any other thing. A good professional kitchen designer knows how to help people save money. We do it as part of our service," he said.

"The price of the cabinets is where they never should cut corners," said David Szydlo, president of Creative

Kitchen and Bath in Canton.

The custom options, workmanship, installation expertise and the length of the warrantee it comes with all determine the price. While he offers a lifetime warrantee, three years is common with some businesses.

Most people are not looking at long-term value, instead preferring to buy the least expensive cabinets.

"The old adage is true," Szydlo said, "You get what you pay for. ... Go with someone reliable who will give you a fair price."

The one place he suggested for saving money was to go with a Formica laminate kitchen countertop rather than quartz or granite. **RHL**

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Living Spaces

Real estate *investing* for beginners



Real estate has historically remained a sound investment, boasting a long-term appreciation rate that makes it a worthwhile investment for those who can withstand temporary setbacks in housing prices and hold on to their properties over the long haul.

The following are a few things potential real estate investors should consider as they decide if investing in real estate is right for them.

Personal ability

Real estate investors typically have tenants, and those tenants inevitably have needs. Investors who have experience as contractors may not find it difficult to renovate a property and make it more attractive to tenants, nor are they likely to be inconvenienced when minor issues on the property need to be addressed. Investors with no

such experience will need to hire contractors to do the work for them, cutting into potential profits down the road. Even those investors with contracting experience may have little or no knowledge of how the leasing process works, forcing them to rely on a real estate firm to write up leases and ensure all leases stay current.

Time

Real estate is often a time-consuming investment. Tenants pay good money to live in attractive rental properties, and those tenants will have a host of needs that must be met.

Investors must be sure they have the time to address their tenants' concerns, especially investors with no plans to hire property management firms. Potential investors who already have full plates at work and at home may not be able to devote the time necessary to

make the most of their real estate investments. Time is also a factor in that real estate is not the type of investment that turns a profit overnight.

Costs

In addition to the mortgage on the property, investors must pay the taxes and insurance on the property, as well as any costs associated with maintaining and managing the property. In the United States, taxes on the profits when a property is sold may be deferred if those profits are immediately rolled into another property (such a deferment is only available to those investors who arrange this exchange prior to selling the initial property).

Potential investors need to consider all of these costs, and might want to hire a real estate lawyer to help them make the most of their investments and any profits they yield. **RHL**



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Nena



Fuzzy

Fuzzy

Fuzzy is a 2-year-old female domestic medium hair cat who exhibits a moderate activity level. She's looking for a home with a quiet general atmosphere and children who are 12 or older. She is an indoor cat exclusively.

Nena

Nena is a 3-year-old female terrier/Staffordshire bull terrier mix. She's feeling a little blue living in a cage and is hopeful someone will give her a loving home. She is well suited for either a single-family home or condominium. Children should be 12 or older. Nena needs daily exercise and might be willing to share her new home with another dog, but absolutely no cats.

Bodhi
Photo credit: Amanda R.

Mario
Photo credit: Alexandria C.

Sunshine
Photo credit: Elizabeth A.

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Photo credit: Stephanie C.

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Letters

Baio stands out as best

To the Editor:

Rocky Hill voters will have three choices for mayor on Nov. 7 but with only one of them will voters know for sure what they're getting. That's because the other two have been busy switching sides in their eagerness to win an election.

One of them started his political career unaffiliated, switched to Democrat, then back to unaffiliated, then to Republican until this year, but when Rocky Hill's Republican Town Committee decided to endorse someone else for mayor, he switched and decided to run as a third-party candidate. Got that?

Another started off several years ago as a Democrat, then switched to unaffiliated, but when she was unable to win her campaigns for elective office, switched again this year to become a Republican and is now launching still another campaign.

With all this switching, it's tough for voters to know exactly what those candidates stand for or how they propose to govern our community.

However, voters know with certainty what Democratic mayoral candidate Claudia Baio and her Town Council team stand for – an honest and carefully controlled municipal budget, support for a strong and relevant educational system, responsiveness to the wishes of the town's seniors, preservation of our valuable farmlands and open spaces, job-creating and tax-producing economic development and attention to the special requirements of the town's neediest citizens.

On Election Day, I urge you to support Mayor Baio for a second term along with the entire Democratic team, so that you'll know with certainty that you're voting for Rocky Hill's responsible growth and progress.

Sandra Kulas Chandler

Consider this before voting

To the Editor:

My name is Kathleen McCooe. I have lived in Rocky Hill since 1985. There are three items that the people in

Rocky Hill need to know.

It was a farming town when I moved here. Now it's a city. The few farmers we have need their land protected, end of story.

Gates need to be closed to the public. After one of the last meetings I took a ride down to the ferry, gates were closed, but yet I still saw teenagers going in there with skateboards. That area should be shut. It is not a public access road.

Rocky Hill High School – a battle I began in 2015 due to the construction in the school which caused my son's sickness. Another family brought up an issue of health problems due to construction six months ago and brought it before government operations.

I attended the Aug. 5 meeting. I gave documentation going back to 2015. Since his graduation, his problems cleared significantly. Superintendent Zito claims only two children got sick from the construction, my son and the other family. If any other child was ill during construction or because of the air quality in the school, please write to Superintendent Zito and let him know.

This school is over budget. The front stairs are wrong and they are testing a material to put on them for winter. As a taxpayer, I am truly concerned that this opens the town to civil liability and us paying more taxes.

Rocky Hill Volunteer Fire Department – many members who served in the 1980s and early 1990s are not getting the benefits they deserve. Members are offered a small pension for their years of service. However, because of lack of paperwork, clerical errors, or poor record keeping, pensions have been computed wrong.

Ex-members have received letters about their years of service telling them how many years of pension they have and years are missing. Some who did not receive a letter and asked have been told they have no years of service. When they ask for a hearing or an explanation, there is really no explanation as to why.

How can you tell someone they



never served as a firefighter or officer? This is inconceivable and years of service are missing with no explanation.

Your vote in November for council members and mayor will be important. Vote wisely. Know who and why.

Kathleen McCooe

He's backing Marotta

To the Editor:

It's that time of year when candidates for various Rocky Hill offices will begin their quest to convince voters to vote for them. Adding to the fun this year will be a third-party entry that promises to unite the town of Rocky Hill, ironic since many of these candidates couldn't unite their own parties for endorsements.

As someone who believes we need change at both local and state levels I am encouraged by the Team Rocky Hill slate led by Lisa Marotta.

This team consists of a diverse group of individuals with strong backgrounds in varying fields of expertise.

Many are newcomers to elected positions but have either served the community on a board or commission or have been active promoting or supporting local causes.

I applaud this group of individuals that have undertaken this goal to get elected and plan to support them on Election Day.

Michael O'Toole

Backs Baio and Democrats

To the Editor:

Mayor Claudia Baio and the entire

Democratic team deserve the support of Rocky Hill voters in November and a look at their record achieved in the current term will provide all the evidence needed to prove the point.

A solar energy project that will save Rocky Hill taxpayers and estimated \$3.6 million over the next 20 years is in the works. A new intermediate school is planned to handle increased enrolments. The senior task force is moving forward with planning for a more responsive community center.

The Democratic commitment to preserving the town's farmland and open spaces was furthered with acquisition of the development rights to the 70-acre Hintz Farm and purchase of a key riverfront residential property for preservation as open space.

Also, this year's municipal budget limited increased spending to a fraction of over 2 percent while keeping the tax rate increase to less than one mill and still significantly less than the mill rates in our neighboring communities.

Mayor Baio and the Democratic team have shown that they are willing and able to work long and hard to produce results that benefit all of our town's citizens. They deserve your vote at the polls on Nov. 7.

State Rep. Antonio Guerrera

Will vote for Lindenberger

To the Editor:

My husband and I moved to Rocky Hill in 2013 and I am writing to endorse Mr. Larry Lindenberger, unaffiliated, as a candidate to serve

Editorial

Legislature should be ashamed

As this issue went to press, the state legislature was still struggling to adopt a budget, even with the fiscal year onset of Oct. 1 staring it in the face. If they have passed a spending plan by the time you read this, it almost certainly is one that creates pain for cities, towns and taxpayers.

That's because too many elected officials allowed a massive deficit to develop before doing anything about it. There is no quick or painless fix to a deficit of more than \$1 billion.

Legislators will tell us that it's not their fault. It's the fault of those who held state office five, seven or 10 years ago. Never mind the fact that many of the people now serving in the House and Senate were in office five, seven or 10 years ago.

One of the problems is that Connecticut has a history of one-party rule in its legislature.

That's never a good idea, no matter which political party wields the power. It inevitably leads to complacency.

But before we pile all the blame on the majority Democrats and incumbent Gov. Dannel Malloy we should also remember that over the past 25 years Connecticut had three other governors: independent Lowell Weicker Jr. and Republicans John Rowland and M. Jodi Rell.

They all share in the blame and there is plenty to go around. How did the problem get this bad? Why didn't somebody see it coming and do some-

thing about it?

It's easy to spend someone else's money and spend it they have, by the millions. There appears to be no sense of responsibility, no awareness of the need to be stewards of the taxpayers' money.

When the lottery was first introduced it was supposed to be the wonderful new revenue stream that would fund all of the state's fiscal needs. The legislature spent it like drunken sailors and kept right on spending.

Then the Native American casinos came along with a windfall of millions of dollars that would not otherwise have become available. Surely that would solve all the state's fiscal needs. They did the same thing.

Follow that with the state personal income tax. That massive pool of money was going to make state government flush in cash forever. To lessen the sting, the public was promised that it was going to be part of overall tax reform that would reduce the burden in other areas.

We're still waiting. It turned out, as its critics proclaimed, to be one more tax on top of all the others.

Maybe what Connecticut needs is a law such as exists in 19 other state and the District of Columbia to hold recall elections. This allows the public to petition at any time prior to the end of an elected official's term to remove him or her from office.

Maybe that would get their attention.

Letters continued

as a member of the Rocky Hill Town Council. Larry and his wife Cindy are next-door neighbors of ours.

Over these past four years I've witnessed care for our neighborhood and neighbors — in particular a 100-year old gentleman who epitomizes "Yankee independence" and depends on Larry's daily checking in, conversation, care of the yard, etc. Larry's quick to lend a hand or friendly advice.

With more than 30 years living here in Rocky Hill, he's able to direct us to local businesses and professionals to help

out with whatever needs attention. In a home built in 1671, there's a lot of maintenance to manage.

Larry's knowledge of town history and his passion for observing our town's growth — with an eye to preserving open spaces and wetlands — is laudable. Larry's years serving on the Rocky Hill Fire Department, his strong focus on civic duty, and his ability to build goodwill and consensus across differences is what we're looking for in governance and leadership.

As the only unaffiliated member of the Unite Rocky Hill

slate, Larry brings a natural balance to four others, two Republicans and two Democrats, who are motivated to finding common ground and working together for the greater good.

We couldn't count ourselves more blessed having Larry and Cindy as our neighbors and we're heartened to know Larry's willing to run with the capacity to measure all sides of an issue and seek solutions that benefit all of us.

A vote for Larry is a vote for Rocky Hill.

Timothy Hodapp

rocky hill LIFE

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



Color Changing...

It's now officially fall and the annual transition of foliage is underway. Of course, being in New England, we're a tourist destination for leaf peepers, compliments of the vibrant show of color.

Back in June on the summer solstice, we had a total of 15 hours and 14 minutes of possible daylight;

by the time we reach the winter solstice, that number shrinks to 9 hours and 7 minutes – a pretty incredible loss of just over 6 hours! As we progress out of summer and into autumn, shorter days and cooler nights signal trees that winter is coming. But before the landscape becomes barren, we are treated to a gorgeous landscape of reds, golds,

yellows and all shades in between.

So why or how does the process happen, before the leaves fall from the trees? It basically comes down to a chemical reaction. All of those brilliant colors are always present, they're just masked during the warmer months by chlorophyll, the green pigment. In the fall, the chlorophyll begins to break down,

fading away, as water is cut off from entering the leaf (when temperatures drop) allowing all of the other colors to appear.

If you're planning travel to catch the sights of the season, every week we'll be bringing you foliage reports from across Connecticut and the Northeast on Channel 3! **RHL**

MARK ZINNI & ERIN CONNOLLY

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